



Witnauer Precious Metals Guild
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THE MEDALLIC COLLECTOR'S NEWSLETTER

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The Talents Of Many Creative Masters Go Into Your Witnauer Precious Metals Guild Medallions



James Vandenberg

AS A SUBSCRIBER to a Witnauer Precious Metals Guild Medallion series, you are already aware of the outstanding artistry that goes into the making of these medallions. The sculpture, of course, can only be described as exquisite.

But we also take great pride in the articulate design and composition of these medallions. And we are proud to present to you one of the talented artists who creates these designs. His name is James Vandenberg.

"Van brings to his job an extensive knowledge of architecture, fine arts and sculpture, as well as a background in art history and experience in jewelry craftsmanship. But above all, he exudes an all-encompassing love of art. 'There's complete joy in creation,' he claims. 'What I enjoy most is being at the inception of an idea, and watching it grow from there.'"

James Vandenberg specialized in art while he was still in high school in Detroit, Michigan. He later studied under Marshall Fredericks and Charles Eames in Cranbrook, Michigan and continued his studies in the service. He graduated from Pratt Institute in New York City, earning a B.A. degree, and taught there for several years. But the desire to

be constantly creative brought him to the commercial art world, where he has contributed his talents to advertising, interior design, color psychology and engineering design. There is no art form he has not, or will not, attempt.

We at Witnauer Precious Metals Guild have been watching his ideas grow for the last 2½ years. Vandenberg has created the designs for most of our National Flag Collection, and has contributed to all our other medallic series.

Visitors to Washington, D.C. can see some of Vandenberg's sculptural designs in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Particularly notable is his design for the Bill of Rights monument on Constitution Avenue. Other pieces may be seen in Valley Forge and Atlanta.

"Van" has other interests too. He enjoys raising hybrid irises at his home in West Nyack, New York, where he lives with his wife, Agnes and their two daughters.

The Witnauer Precious Metals Guild is proud to claim the outstanding talents of James Vandenberg, and prouder still to offer his medallic designs for your aesthetic pleasure.

Women Of The United States One-Dollar Pieces

Until the issuance of the Eisenhower silver dollar, each of the United States one-dollar pieces has been graced with the portrait of a woman. Most of the female heads and bodies represent the allegorical figure of Liberty and are considered to illustrate the accepted standard of womanly beauty of their time.

There were 11 one-dollar designs minted during the years from 1794 to 1935. Of the 11, 8 were silver dollars and 3 were gold dollars.

The very first United States silver dollar was designed by the team of Robert Scot and John Gardner in 1793. After the necessary approvals were granted, 204,791 coins were minted between 1794 and 1795. The new coin was greeted with enthusiasm by the men and women of the country.



1st U.S. Dollar Design

On this coin Liberty is pictured in profile with the typical classic Greek nose and forehead. The head is tilted upward, the clear eyes gaze toward the horizon. The most striking feature of the head is the hair. Unfettered by combs, ribbons or ornaments, the long wavy tresses stream back from the face as though pushed by a free, fresh breeze. This is an idealized portrait of the Revolutionary Woman, brave and strong, calmly facing the elements.

Above the profile is the word "Liberty" and below it is the date. The two are joined by strips of stars to make a circle around the head.

Reeding or marking the edge of the coin with small vertical strokes was unknown in 1794 so the edge is protected from the illegal practice of coin clipping or shaving by lettering. The edge is lettered "Hundred cents, one dollar or unit."

No more than a year had passed when the second United States silver dollar was issued. The designer was Gilbert Stuart, the illustrious artist whose portrait of General George Washington is regarded as one of our national treasures.

The Revolution was another year further back in the memories of United States citizens and the country was fast developing a style and a way of life that could be called American. The 1795 head of Liberty illustrates this change quite graphically.



2nd U.S. Dollar Design

Gone are the flowing tresses and upturned head. The new Liberty is much more a creature of fashion. The head is still in profile facing right, but is looking straight ahead as though engaged in polite conversation. A soft mane of shoulder-length curls is pulled back from the face and caught in a perky ribbon bow. A cluster of short waves adorns the top of her head, partially covering the Greek brow.

The head design does not end at the base of the neck as in the 1794 dollar, but extends down to include the bust, draped gracefully in a rather decollete manner. Designer Stuart's Liberty is pretty, sophisticated and obviously more at home in the drawing room than on the battlefield.

This beribboned, coiffed and draped lady continues to represent Liberty on the next two United States silver dollars. The issuance of the Great Seal of the United States most probably had some influence on the succeeding coin designs, and in 1798 a new dollar was issued. The Liberty profile was identical, but the reverse of the coin, which had always shown some sort of American eagle design, was changed to look like the eagle that appeared on the Great Seal.

Production of United States silver dollars was suspended by act of Congress in 1804, and resumed in 1840. A specimen dollar, created by famous American coin designer Christian Gobrecht, was minted in small quantities in 1836. Once again times had changed. The profile head of the earlier sophisticate was replaced by the seated figure of a woman representing Liberty. One hand extends down to steady the shield of the United States, over which is draped a ribbon scroll inscribed "Liberty."



Dollar Designed by Gobrecht

The other hand holds a staff on the top of which hangs the Phrygian slave's cap, long a symbol

of revolutionary causes. The origin of the soft, peaked, rimless cap goes back to the Phrygians of Asia Minor. It was the style of this cap, worn by the Phrygians, that was adopted by the freedmen of ancient Rome to visually distinguish themselves from the Roman slave caste.

The seated Liberty is austere and distant. Her shoulder-length hair is slightly wavy rather than curly, and is neatly pulled back and tied at the base of the head. A loose, Grecian style gown totally envelops her body, hiding any suggestion of cleavage. She is goddess-like and unreachable. No drawing room for her.

In 1840 the seated Liberty was used on a larger issue of silver dollars. The eagle on the reverse of the coin was redesigned by Robert Ball Hughes, and replaced the eagle in flight of the 1836 Gobrecht design.

This seated Liberty is especially interesting to numismatists in light of the historical development of that era. The individual states of the heretofore United States were beginning to feel the differences that were eventually to split the country into opposing camps and erupt into the bloody War Between the States. The use of the Phrygian cap in the design is almost an eerie portent of the slavery issue that was to stir the emotions of people in both the North and the South.

The seated Liberty was the female form on United States silver dollars until 1873, when all silver dollars were discontinued by order of the Congressional Act of February 12, 1873.

However, that same year saw the issuance of a new American silver dollar that was not to be used within the continental boundaries of the United States. This was the Trade Dollar, designed by



Trade Dollar by William Barber

sculptor William Barber. By that time the Civil War was only a sad memory. The country was busily engaged in the opening of the West. Trade with the Orient was a vital part of the American economy, but American coins were not welcomed by the Chinese merchants. The splendid Mexican peso, the Piece of Eight, was preferred, being heavier in weight.

In answer to this problem a new United States silver dollar was created of heavier weight. It eventually found acceptance in the China trade, and

sometimes is still encountered today in remote parts of the Eastern world.

This Liberty design illustrates the eagerness of the United States to enter into foreign trade, and to show a few choice examples of American riches that would be available to the trader.

The figure, still draped *a la grecque*, is seated on a bale of cotton, at the back of which is propped a sheaf of wheat. From her left hand dangles a scroll lettered "Liberty." Body and head face left, the "West" of the map reader, and waters of a Western ocean lap at her bare feet. The figure is leaning forward in an anticipatory pose. But the clincher is the olive branch held in her right hand, extended out over the sea. It would be hard to miss the commercial message here!

The Bland-Allison Act of February 28, 1878 reinstated the domestic silver dollar. The new Miss Liberty was on the first coin designed by George Morgan, formerly an engraver with the Royal Mint in London. He abandoned the full figure portrayal and went back to a profile of a female head.



Dollar Designed by George Morgan

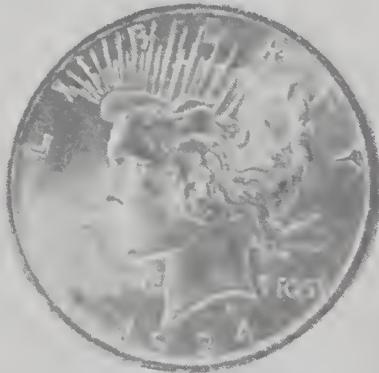
The woman faces left and still is slightly Grecian in features, which was the accepted beauty style of the day. Her hair is shorter, wavy, and pulled back off the face, tucked into—yes, a Phrygian cap. The cap is decorated with a small front headband inscribed "Liberty," and side ornaments of wheat and cotton sprays. Over her head is the motto, "E Pluribus Unum," and below is the date.

A pleasant story is handed down about the designing of the woman's profile. Mr. Morgan was quite smitten with the beauty of one Miss Anna Williams, who taught philosophy and allied subjects at a school near the Philadelphia Mint. He asked her to pose for him as Liberty, but she refused, saying it offended her sense of modesty. Several months passed during which Mr. Morgan ardently pursued Miss Williams, apparently convincing her that her modesty could remain unoffended even if she agreed to be his model.

Agree she finally did, and the records show a total of five sessions between the two, resulting in the design that is still considered one of the finest ever produced by the Philadelphia Mint. It would be interesting to know the fates of the artist and his model after the five sessions, but historians are not romanticists, and the record ends there.

The last "female" silver dollar issued by the United States Treasury was the Peace Dollar, minted in 1921. It was created to mark the cessation of hostilities between the United States and Germany, the "War To End All Wars," and to celebrate the concept of people living together in peace forever.

Anthony DeFrancisci, who had emigrated from Italy as a child, was chosen to design the coin. He was well-qualified, having studied in American schools and served his apprenticeship under artists such as James E. Fraser, designer of the Indian Head Nickel, and Adolph Weinman, sculptor-creator of the Winged Liberty Head Dime.



The Peace Dollar

As in the 1878 dollar, only a head is shown, facing left. She is a serious, business-like Liberty, with a tiara of spike-like radiants set squarely on her head. Her long hair is pulled back loosely and formed into a bun on the upper back of her head.

When Mr. DeFrancisci received the Peace Dollar design commission, he asked his wife to be his model. She was Teresa Cafarelli DeFrancisci, who had emigrated with her family from Italy when she was five years old. Legend has it that her first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty, appearing out of the mists across the bow of the ocean liner, had made an indelible impression on the youngster. During her school years she wrote a number of compositions about the Statue of Liberty and portrayed the figure in several school pageants and plays. She was a fitting choice for the model.

Thus the profile on the Peace Dollar bears no resemblance to a Greek statue. The new Liberty is quite definitely based on a creature of flesh and blood. An interesting note is that the lips of the woman are parted, the mouth is open as though she is speaking the word "Peace," or spreading the gospel of peaceful living to all who come in contact with the coin. At any rate, Liberty is talking about something, or perhaps that is merely the way Mr. DeFrancisci chose to immortalize his wife.

The three one-dollar gold pieces issued by the United States coincide with the national fervor surrounding the Gold Rush in the 1840s and 1850s. On March 3, 1849, Congress authorized the first one-dollar gold piece. Prominent American sculptor James Barton Longacre was commissioned to

design the coin. He ended up designing all three one-dollar gold pieces, as he was the leading coin designer of the period, and also a well-known personality of the day.

For the initial gold dollar, minted between 1849 and 1854, Longacre chose a rather subdued female profile set within a border of 13 stars. She faces left, has hair neatly pulled back, with a few discreet curls extending down onto her shoulder. She wears a simple coronet inscribed "Liberty," whose sole decoration is a beaded top edging.

Longacre's daughter, Sarah, modeled for the one-dollar design as she did for many of his other coin designs.

The coin was quite small and relatively insignificant-looking, so the public was not too impressed. Critical word got back to the Treasury, and a slightly larger but thinner coin was then issued. The change in shape was necessary in order to maintain the constant weight of gold in the coin, and Treasury officials reasoned that a coin of larger diameter would look more impressive.

Longacre redesigned Sarah's features, retaining her basic profile but turning her into an American Indian princess, complete with a version of the feathered headdress generally worn by the daughters of Indian chiefs.

This coin was received with greater enthusiasm by the public. With the Civil War wreaking havoc up and down the East Coast, interest in the West was at an all-time high. So the choice of an Indian maiden wearing a feathered headdress labeled "Liberty" must have seemed extremely logical.

Longacre had long felt that the American Indian headdress, be it male or female, was as natively American as the turbaned headdress was natively Asian. He considered it much more appropriate than the favored Phrygian cap for use on United States coins.

His sentiment seems rather odd today in light of what the Americans were doing to the Indians during those years. An Indian headdress marked "Liberty" was a strange symbol to utilize during the period of grisly wars between white men and Indians, ending with the suppression of the tribes and their eventual imprisonment on government reservations.

Some critics of the day advocated a return to the use of the Phrygian cap on the coin. They questioned Longacre at length about the appropriateness of the Indian headdress. Mr. Longacre stuck by his beliefs, however, and eventually quelled all criticism with the lofty statement, "We have only to determine that it *shall* be appropriate and all the world cannot wrest it from us."

